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KENNETH A. GIBSON, MAYOR

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MAYOR GIBSON APPOINTED TO AIDS TASK FORCE

Newark Mayor Kenneth A. Gibson today (April 20) announced he has been appointed to the U.S. Conference of Mayors Task Force on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). Detroit Mayor Coleman Young, president of the mayors' group, requested that Gibson serve on the special task force because he is mayor of "one of the cities most affected by the emerging and frightening public health problem."

Serving with Mayor Gibson will be Mayor Diane Feinstein of San Francisco, the city believed to be most affected by AIDS. New York, Chicago, Detroit, and Los Angeles are also affected by the disease.

"The mission of the task force will be to bring the seriousness of the disease to the attention of government officials and get the federal support needed for epidemiological and medical research," said Gibson. "This disease depresses the body's natural immunity system. Its victims cannot resist diseases, infections, or viruses. That is what kills them," the Mayor added.

Gibson expressed support for Assemblywoman Angela Perun's bill to establish an AIDS Task Force Center at the University of Medicine and Dentistry in Newark: "The Assembly Corrections and Health Committee

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released the bill on April 11 with a \$75,000 appropriation so that the University can educate the public and the health care professionals about this problem."

Mayor Gibson explained in his announcement that AIDS is a highly contagious disease, transmitted in an unknown manner. It is irreversible, however, with eight Newark children already having contracted AIDS, and four having died. The mortality rate of the disease, which may be caused by a virus, exceeds 50 per cent.

"The clock is ticking fast and we are racing against time to find the cure for this killer," Gibson continued. "Only a major commitment on the part of the federal government will result in the type of research needed to conquer this urban health problem."

Commenting on the federal government's commitment to AIDS research, Gibson said "the National Institute of Health intends to spend less than \$8 million in Fiscal Year 1983 on AIDS research. That will not be enough to solve this baffling public health emergency. It has been predicted by the Center for Disease Control that there will be more than 2,000 cases of AIDS by the end of the year.

"We need a serious substantial commitment of funds to find out what causes AIDS, how to prevent its spread and how to cure it. Already, 1300 cases have been reported and each day, 3 to 5 new ones are reported. We must act now to eradicate this devastating problem," concluded Gibson.

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